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VOLUME 178

Togo

Samuel Decalo

Compiler

CLIO PRESS
OXFORD, ENGLAND · SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA
DENVER, COLORADO

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Togo. – (World Bibliographical Series; vol. 178)
I. Decalo, Samuel. II. Series
016.96681

ISBN 1–85109–160–2

ABC-CLIO Ltd.,
Old Clarendon Ironworks,
35A Great Clarendon Street,
Oxford OX2 6AT, England.

ABC-CLIO Inc.,
130 Cremona Drive,
Santa Barbara,
CA 93116, USA

Designed by Bernard Crossland.
Typeset by Columns Design and Production Services Ltd., Reading, England.
Printed and bound in Great Britain by Bookcraft (Bath) Ltd., Midsomer Norton.

DT
582.5 016.96681 Africana
.D433 D355t
1995

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Introduction

Togo is a small country in West Africa with an area of 21,620 square miles; it has a 32-mile long coastline and extends 320 miles inland. Situated between Benin and Ghana, Togo, which occupies two-thirds of the territory of the original German colony, has a northern border with Burkina Faso, for which it provides access to the sea.

Geographically, Togo has six naturally distinct regions. The sandy beaches and inland lagoons of the coast, the largest being Lac Togo, give way to the Ouatchi plateaux to their immediate rear, while further north lies the higher Mono tableland, which is drained by the Mono River and its tributaries. The fourth area is dominated by a mountain range, which dissects the country in a south-west, north-east direction and is part of neighbouring Benin's Atakora mountains that end in Ghana's Akwapim hills. It is here that Togo's highest altitude, Pic Baumann, is found, climbing to a height of 986 metres. Travel further north leads to the sandstone Oti plateau, through which the Oti river, a tributary of the Volta river, flows, and from there to the granite regions of Dapaong in the far north.

The country is heavily vegetated with grasslands. The highest rainfall (approximately 180 centimetres annually) falls at Kpalimé, 120 kilometres in the interior, while the coast is rather dry, recording only 65 to 90 centimetres of rain per year. The north has one rainy season between April and July (115 centimetres per year) while in the south there are two rainy seasons between April and July and October and November.

Togo has a population of 3.85 million (1993), comprising between eighteen and thirty different ethnic groups (depending upon one's classification). The largest and most important of these are the Ewe (and other Adja-related groups) who reside in the south and form forty-four per cent of the population, followed by the Kabre (and related groups) in the north who make up twenty-seven per cent. Prior to colonial rule most groups had little contact with each other. State formation was

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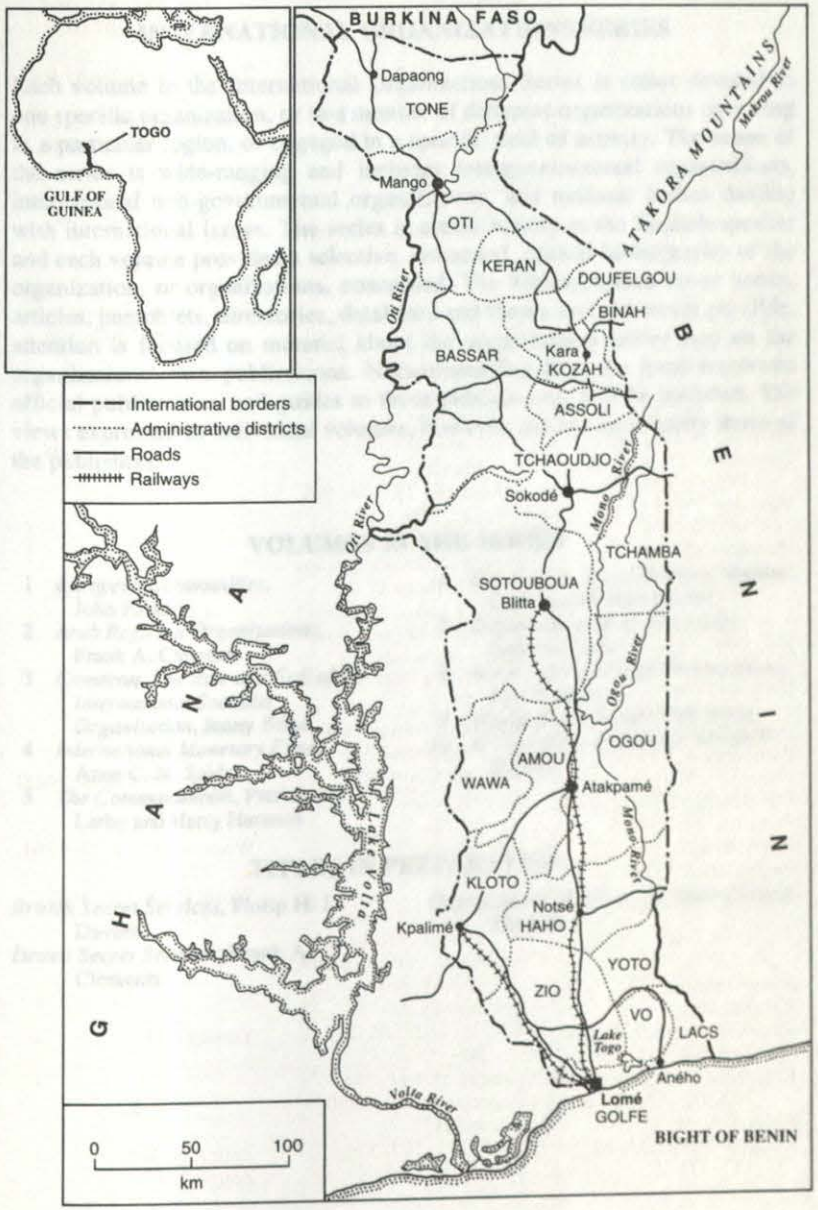
This map shows the more important towns and other features.